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## WALTER MAP AND SER GIOVANNI

Walter Map's *De Nugis Curialium* contains only one story which has been claimed as the source of a later piece of mediaeval fiction. A peculiar interest naturally attaches to that story, *De Rollone et eius uxore*, which is found in *Distinctio III*, cap. v, of Map's book.<sup>1</sup> This interest is heightened as a consequence of proof, which I have recently advanced,<sup>2</sup> that the *De Nugis* was never really completed and published by its author, but survives, in a unique manuscript, only by a lucky chance. It is therefore fitting to scan the evidence of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's indebtedness to Walter Map. Map's story runs as follows:

Rollo, a man of high reputation for knightly virtues, was blest in possession of a most fair wife and in perfect freedom from jealousy. A youth named Resus, who in comeliness, birth, and all other respects surpassed the other youths of the neighborhood, languished for love of Rollo's wife, but received no encouragement from her. He tearfully admitted to himself his inferiority to the peerless Rollo, but, sustained by his high spirit, he resolved to merit his lady's favor. From Rollo himself he obtained the belt of knighthood, and with unfailing gallantry he proceeded to win martial honors for his name. He won favor from all except the lady whom he adored.

It happened one day that Resus met Rollo and his wife out riding. Rollo greeted him courteously, and the young man, turning his horse, for a while escorted his lord and lady. Then, saluting them with becoming words, he departed. The lady maintained a cool indifference, but Rollo looked after the departing youth for a long time, then turned his gaze ahead and rode on in silence. His wife, fearing his suspicions, asked why he looked so intently at one who was not regarding him; and Rollo replied: "I like to look at him. Would that I might ever behold that most noble spectacle of the world, a man graced in birth, manners, beauty, riches, honor, and the favor of all."

The lady took this praise to heart. Though she dissembled her interest, she pondered over Rollo's encomium, reflecting that he was an excellent judge of men. What she had heard of Resus must be credited. She began to

<sup>1</sup> Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium* (ed. M. R. James, Oxford, 1914), pp. 135-37. In this book occurs also, of course, the *Epistle of Valerius to Ruffinus*, which was widely known in the Middle Ages, but attained its circulation separately from the *De Nugis*.

<sup>2</sup> "Walter Map's *De Nugis Curialium*: Its Plan and Composition," in *PMLA*, XXXII (1917), 81.

repent of her severity, and in due time she summoned Resus. He came with alacrity, astonished but happy, and was received by his lady in a private chamber. She said: "Perhaps you wonder, dearest, after so many cruel refusals, what has so suddenly given me to you. Rollo is the cause, for I had not heeded common report, but the assertion of him whom I know to be trustworthy has convinced me." With these words she drew Resus to her; but he, putting a curb on his passionate impulses, replied: "Never shall Resus return Rollo an injury for a favor; discourteous it would be for me to violate his bed, since he has conferred what all the world could not." And so he departed.

Liebrecht was the first to point out that this story is the same as the first *novella* in Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's *Il Pecorone*, which Dunlop had praised as "one of the most beautiful triumphs of honor which has ever been recorded."<sup>1</sup> Liebrecht's opinion as to the relations of the two stories altered somewhat. Originally (1860) he pronounced *Rollo and Resus* either "the direct or indirect source" of the *novella*,<sup>2</sup> but later, when he revised his article for his volume *Zur Volkskunde* (1879), he declared unequivocally that Map presents the "direct source."<sup>3</sup> Before discussing Liebrecht's opinion we must examine Ser Giovanni's *novella*.<sup>4</sup>

There was in Siena a youth named Galgano, rich, of noted family, skilled in every accomplishment, brave, magnanimous, beloved of all. He loved a lady named Minoccia, the wife of Messere Stricca. Galgano endeavored by jousting and by entertainments to gain this lady's favor, but in vain. One day, while Stricca and his wife were at their country place, Galgano went hawking near by. Stricca saw him and invited him in, but the youth reluctantly declined. Soon afterward his falcon pursued a bird into the garden of Messere Stricca, who happened to be looking out, his wife with him. She asked to whom the falcon belonged, and he replied: "The falcon has a master whom it may well emulate, for it belongs to the most noble and esteemed youth of Siena," and, in response to further inquiry, he named Galgano.

Minoccia was impressed, and soon afterward, when Stricca was sent on an embassy to Perugia, she sent for Galgano. He came, was entertained, and at last was taken to the lady's chamber. There, however, Minoccia noticed an appearance of timidity in Galgano, and asked him if he were not

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Dunlop, *Geschichte der Prosadichtungen* (trans. F. Liebrecht, Berlin, 1851), p. 259; J. C. Dunlop, *History of Prose Fiction* (ed. Henry Wilson, London, 1896), II, 157.

<sup>2</sup> F. Liebrecht, "Zu den Nugae Curialium," in Pfeiffer's *Germania*, V.

<sup>3</sup> F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde* (Heilbronn, 1879), pp. 43-45.

<sup>4</sup> Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, *Il Pecorone* (Milan, 1804), I, i; Dunlop-Wilson, *History of Prose Fiction*, pp. 157-59. The collection was begun in 1378.

well pleased. He swore that he was, but begged one request: that she would tell him why her behavior had changed so suddenly. Minoccia recalled the falcon incident and her husband's praises. Galgano implored her for another reason, and, receiving none, he exclaimed: "Truly, it is not pleasing to God, nor would I, since your husband has said such courtesy of me, that I should use villainy toward him." So saying, he took his departure. Never again did he pay any attention to the lady, and he always manifested a singular love and esteem for Messere Stricca.

Certainly the stories of Map and of Ser Giovanni are strikingly alike, not only in theme, but in detail. It is not surprising that Liebrecht's theory of their relation met with no opposition. Egidio Gorra, in his study of *Il Pecorone*,<sup>1</sup> quotes Liebrecht's original opinion with approval, but adds that it is important to determine whether the *De Nugis Curialium* affords Ser Giovanni's direct or indirect source. The theme, he says, was widespread in the Middle Ages, and he cites as similar the *Lai de Graellent*<sup>2</sup> and the story of the troubadour, Guillem de Saint-Didier.<sup>3</sup>

With regard to these two stories, of Graellent and of Guillem, I must disagree with Gorra. The point of the Resus-Galgano story is the magnanimous renunciation of a woman, passionately loved and, after a long suit, won, by a hero who is actuated solely by a sense of chivalrous indebtedness to her husband for unwittingly causing his wife's submission. Graellent, on the other hand, had no long-fostered passion to contend with, and it was not the husband's, but the general, praise that won for him the lady's love; Graellent refused her, as Joseph refused Potiphar's wife, or as Map's Galo refused the Queen of Asia,<sup>4</sup> because his loyalty to his master was proof against illicit love for his master's wife. Guillem is still farther removed from the high sense of honor manifest in Resus and Galgano, since he deliberately contrived a trap<sup>5</sup> for the husband so that, willing or unwilling, the wife must grant his suit. This motive is nearer akin to that of Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale* and of the fifth novel of the

<sup>1</sup> Egidio Gorra, *Studi di critica letteraria* (Bologna, 1892), pp. 201-8.

<sup>2</sup> Barbazan-Méon, *Fabliaux et contes* (Paris, 1808), IV, 57-80.

<sup>3</sup> F. Diez, *Leben und Werke der Troubadours* (ed. K. Bartsch, Leipzig, 1882), pp. 261-63.

<sup>4</sup> *De Nugis Curialium*, Dist. III, cap. ii, pp. 104-22.

<sup>5</sup> In this respect the story is like one in the *Hitopadeça* (I, vii), which Gorra recognizes as different from Ser Giovanni's.

tenth day of the *Decameron*,<sup>1</sup> in which the lover plots to fulfil a supposedly impossible condition set by the lady purely in hope of ridding herself of unwelcome attentions; the lady yields a debt of honor. There may be held to exist a balance of merit; there is not a single outstanding hero, such as Resus or Galgano. The compact between the wife and the lover gives a different shape to motivation, character, and incident.<sup>2</sup>

Gorra, however, passes lightly over this matter of analogues to a genuine contribution on the relation of Map's and Ser Giovanni's tales. A century after Ser Giovanni, Masuccio Salernitano retells in his collection, *Il Novellino*, the story of Map and of the Florentine. According to custom, Masuccio declares that his story is true; he had heard it a few days before concerning Bertramo d'Aquino, a cavalier of the family of Madonna Antonella d'Aquino, Contessa Camerlinga, to whom he addresses the story.<sup>3</sup> *Il Novellino* was first published at Naples in 1476 and is thought to have been written not long before that date.<sup>4</sup> Bertramo d'Aquino, Masuccio says, was a follower of Charles of Anjou, who triumphantly entered Naples after the defeat of Manfred at Benevento, 1266 A.D. Not much importance need be attached to Masuccio's assertion that he had just learned of this story.<sup>5</sup>

Bertramo, who was prudent and valiant above all others in King Charles' army, joined the other victors in the gayeties of Neapolitan society. There he met the beautiful Madonna Fiola Torella, wife of Messer Corrado, a fellow-soldier and dear friend of Bertramo. He endeavored by his jousting and entertainments to win the lady's admiration and favor, but without

<sup>1</sup> Jacob Ulrich (*Ausgewählte Novellen Sacchetti's, Ser Giovanni's, und Sercambis in Italienische Bibliothek* [Leipzig, 1891], p. xvi) refers to *Decameron*, X, v, as an analogue of *Il Pecorone*, I, i.

<sup>2</sup> The husband's resignation of the wife, wittingly and without obligation of honor, is still a different motive. Koegel (*Geschichte der deutschen Literatur* [Strassburg, 1894-97], I, 258) errs in connecting *Lantfrid and Cobbo* with Map's story.

<sup>3</sup> Masuccio Salernitano, *Il Novellino* (ed. L. Settembrini, Napoli, 1874), pp. 243-44, 536. On these protestations cf. Gaetano Amalfi, "Quellen und Parallelen zum *Novellino* des Salernitaners Masuccio" in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, X, 33 ff.; the study is concluded at pp. 136 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Il Novellino*, p. xxxiii.

<sup>5</sup> *Il Novellino*, Part III, nov. i (the twenty-first novel of the collection). Amalfi (*loc. cit.*) says that this *novella* was retold in the seventeenth-century collection of the *Accademici Incogniti*, of whom Gian Francesco Loredano was chief (cf. Wiese and Percopo, *Gesch. d. ital. Lit.*, p. 451), and also by Adolfo Albertazzi (*Liberalità di Messer Bertrando d'Aquino*) in his *Parvenze e sembianze* (Bologna, 1892), and by Saint-Denis in *Comptes du monde aventureux* (nouv. xxxviii). Of these I have seen only the last; it is certainly derived from Masuccio.

avail; from honesty or from real love for her husband she crushed her lover's hopes. One day Messer Corrado, Fiola, and other knights and ladies, while hawking, beheld a wild falcon flush a covey of partridges and scatter them. Messer Corrado exclaimed that he fancied he was beholding his captain, Messer Bertramo, dispersing their enemies in battle; unaware of Bertramo's love for Fiola, he ran on and on with brave tales of the captain's exploits until all were charmed with admiration, Fiola not less than the others.

Soon after, Bertramo, passing her house, was greeted with a salutation so gracious that he sought out a friend to solve for him the riddle of woman's ways. His friend cynically lectured him on the fickleness and frailty of women and bade him write at once for a rendezvous. Bertramo obeyed and was duly received in Fiola's garden; after a time he and Fiola were conducted by a trusted maid into a *camera terrena*, where all was prepared for their enjoyment. In the course of their conversation Bertramo curiously inquired why Fiola had softened toward him. She related at length the falcon incident, her husband's eulogy, and its influence. Bertramo responded in a long antistrophe on the fine points of a gentle nature, leading up to the avowal: "It is not pleasing to God that such villainy should appear in a cavalier of Aquino." Thereupon he renounced Fiola in another lengthy speech, cast jewels in her lap, bade her remember the lesson of his experience, kissed her tenderly, and departed. Fiola was somewhat dazed at this fine oration and not a little piqued at her lover's departure, but, actuated by woman's instinctive avarice, she gathered the jewels and returned to her house. The story, Masuccio says, leaked out, much to the credit of Bertramo among his fellows.

To Masuccio this tale is an example of feminine weakness rather than of masculine honor. It is the first *novella* of the third part, "nella quale il defettivo muliebre sesso sarà in parte crucciato," and is connected with the next *novella* by a link in which the author diverts attention from Bertramo to the woman. Masuccio adds the confidant of the hero, a figure which does not appear in the *De Nugis* nor in *Il Pecorone*, and thus complicates the plot slightly, making Bertramo write before Fiola summons him. I have no doubt that Masuccio himself, not his source, is responsible for this alteration; he doubtless wished merely to get a pretext for working in a cynical harangue against women.

Gorra thinks that Masuccio is not dependent on Ser Giovanni, first, because of divergences in the handling of the plot, and secondly, because *Il Pecorone* had not been printed in Masuccio's time, and, Gorra thinks, it is unlikely that Masuccio had seen a manuscript of

it. There is, however, a significant point which the *novelle* have in common, but which is wanting in Map's version: the falcon incident. Because of this, Gorra holds that Map does not present the direct source of the Italian versions, though he may present a more remote source. Gorra could go no farther with safety unless a version with the falcon incident should be discovered.

Such a version I have found. Giraldus Cambrensis, in his *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, relates the following story:<sup>1</sup>

There was in France an excellent knight, Reginald de Pumpuna,<sup>2</sup> who, in a land where so many good knights were to be found, was incomparable in valor. For a long time he loved the wife of a certain knight, but never won any favor from her until one day her husband, on returning from a tournament which had been held near-by, fell to conversing with his comrades on the victors of the day. All agreed in praising Reginald above all others, whereupon the lady asked her husband if such praise was truly deserved. He replied: "Even so, for as doves flee before a falcon, so before Reginald all knights flee." By this praise the lady was overcome. Very soon her husband's absence gave her an opportunity, and she sent for her lover. He came, but before surrendering himself to her embraces he asked how it came to pass that she, who had been so long obdurate, now offered him that unexpected pleasure. She told him of her husband's praises, and Reginald exclaimed that he too would change his mind because of the same praises, and would never again love her in injury to the one who had pronounced them.

The *Gemma Ecclesiastica* was one of the proudest works of Giraldus Cambrensis. He presented a copy of it to Pope Innocent III, who, according to Giraldus, valued it so highly and was so jealous of its safe-keeping that he would let no one else read it.<sup>3</sup> We need not imagine, however, that Innocent's successors were all equally fond of the Welshman's work, and we may safely assume that, in the course of time, the book was accessible to Italian clerks.

<sup>1</sup> *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, II, xli, in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, Rolls Series, II, 226-28.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to identify this knight. A letter from Henry, Count of Champagne, to Suger, Abbot of Saint-Denis, written in the year 1149, concerns a knight who had been captured in a tournament by "Reginald de Pompona" (Bouquet, *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, XV, 511). Among those who swear to a compact between the king of France and the count of Mellent, "Reginald de Pompona" stands second on the part of the count, just above William de Garlande (Bouquet, *Recueil*, XVI, 16).

<sup>3</sup> See Brewer's preface to *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, II, ix-x. The Lambeth manuscript contains the only known copy of the *Gemma Ecclesiastica*; it is surmised that this may be the pope's copy, or that Gerald's gift may still repose in the Vatican.

Thus we find a possible source, more or less direct, for the *novelle* of Ser Giovanni and Masuccio—a source which contains the falcon simile, and which, we know, was within reach of Italian story-tellers. It may be noted that, in addition to the falcon simile, these three versions agree against Map's in making the lover inquire why the lady has softened toward him, and also in representing the lover as a man of secure reputation at the time when he falls in love. The effect of Map's story is intensified by the representation of Resus' love as the one motive of his life. In humility he realized that a nameless lad was not a worthy rival for the noble Rollo, and therefore he devoted himself to becoming a peerless knight in all the excellences of the chivalric ideal; when he had attained his desire, he found that chivalric honor prohibited him from accepting the prize for which alone he had striven.

If the story of Reginald de Pumpuna were not more like the two *novelle* than is the story of Resus, it would still be a more likely source for them, for we can account for its presence in Italy. The only positive ground for supposing that the *De Nugis Curialium* was so widely circulated, or indeed was circulated at all, has been Liebrecht's theory that it contains the source of Ser Giovanni's *novella*. It is needless to accept that theory any longer.

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